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Home College Series.

Number  Nineteen.

# CHINA AND JAPAN.

BY

REV. J. I. BOSWELL.

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J. H. VINCENT.

NEW YORK, Jan., 1888.

## CHINA AND JAPAN.

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### CHINA.

AFTER a voyage through the inland sea of Japan—the most beautiful sea voyage in the world—and then eighty miles up the Pearl River, the steamer anchors at Canton. It is here that one gets his first view of Chinese life.

*Canton.*—The city is inclosed by a brick wall six miles in circumference. The streets are long and narrow, and the houses are in general but two stories high. On the ground floor are the shops filled with productions from every clime; and numerous eating-houses, where cats, dogs, rats, owls, and other delicacies are served up. The population numbers about a million and a half of persons, and along the river, for four or five miles, are boats and vessels in which many families dwell. In the middle of the stream are the Chinese junks, or trading-ships, which go to the numerous towns on the coast. There are about 120 temples, but they are not of especial interest. They are gloomy looking structures, and the place in front of them is filled with traders and beggars. This city was the first one in China opened to European commerce. In the year 1634 an English ship visited Canton, and in 1667 tea was first imported to England. From this date to 1834 the powerful East India Company held a monopoly of the trade. The opposition of the Chinese government led to war with England, which ended in the treaty of 1842, in which four additional ports were opened, and foreigners were permitted to enter Canton.

*China.*—The Empire of China is of vast extent, and embraces the dependencies of Manchuria, Mongolia, and Tibet.

It comprises one third of the continent of Asia, and one ninth of the dry land of the globe. China proper is about one half of the empire, and is 1,500 miles long by about 1,400 miles in width, and its area is said to contain a million and a half square miles. The greater part of China proper is a vast rolling plain watered by three great rivers, and of wonderful fertility. Local famines occur, but these can be relieved by good roads and proper means of transportation. Rice and tea are raised in great abundance, and the culture of silk has been carried on from a remote period. In the western portion of China are ranges of mountains which subside into hills as they near the eastern provinces. The mineral resources are abundant. Iron is found in great purity, and there is a coal-field near the iron region which it is thought could supply the entire world for several thousand years at the present rate of consumption.

The rivers are numerous, and form the best and most frequented highways of travel. The two largest are the Hoang-ho, or Yellow River, and the Yang-tse-Kiang. The first-named river courses through the great eastern plain, and in time of flood often changes its course, spreading desolation. It has been called "the sorrow of China," and will deserve that name until the science of the engineer controls its channel. Its navigation is impeded by numerous shoals. Far more valuable is the Yang-tse-Kiang, which flows for 2,900 miles, and then empties into the Yellow Sea. Steamers sail up this river a distance of 1,200 miles.

Canals are of early construction. The most important is the one known in Europe as the Grand Canal. It was built in 1289, and is about one thousand miles in length. The roads of China are well built, but the method of travel is slow. The great highway lies along the fortieth parallel, and is eighty feet in width. It stretches from the Caspian Sea through Turkestan, and over the desert to the west end of the Great Wall. Thence it leads to the ancient capital of

Singan, and thence to Peking, the modern capital. For centuries this road was the only way from China to the rest of the world. It was once lined with cities, and along it commerce traveled. The route to China is now by water; but when the barriers China has raised are broken down, the railroad will carry the tea of Amoy and the silks of Honan to the markets of Europe.

There are few public buildings to attract the tourist. The "Great Wall" is the most wonderful monument of human industry. It stretches for 1,500 miles, bridging rivers, crossing mountains, and fortified with brick towers at regular intervals. It is twenty-five feet high and twenty feet thick, and was built 2,000 years ago to keep out the Tartar hosts. It, however, failed of its purpose.

*History.*—The history of China goes back to an early period, but fails to account for the origin of the race. Wanderers from some unknown land came to the Yellow River and settled in its fertile valley. They were at first herdsmen, and then farmers. According to fables, one leader taught them to build huts, another to produce fire, another to register time by a knotted cord, and another invented the plow. To a woman—a queen—is ascribed the merit of discovering the silk produced by the worm, and of working it into a garment.

The mist of obscurity begins to break with the reign of Yaou, (2356 B. C.,) at which point the history of Confucius begins. The nation now advanced swiftly in wealth and in the arts of life. Lands were drained, great fairs established, and crime was but little known. The Chow dynasty began 1122 B. C., and continued nine hundred years. The founder of this dynasty was brave and good, but he broke up the kingdom into seventy-two provinces, which he gave to relatives and to deserving soldiers. Thus began the feudal system, with its splendid castles and noble princes, and its

feasts and ceremonies. Glitter and show abounded, followed by jealousies and wars between the rival provinces. This state of things could not last always, and so, in 255 B. C., a new dynasty arose. This feudal period covers the period of classical China, for then arose the three great wise men, of whom Confucius is the chief. They labored, but in vain, to check the downward progress of the nation.

In 246 B. C. Che Hwang-te ascended the throne at the age of thirteen, and became "the first universal emperor." He was one of the greatest rulers of the empire. He built a splendid palace, laid out roads and canals, abolished the feudal system, put down rebellion, and with a great army inflicted a crushing blow upon the terrible Tartars. His monument is the gigantic wall which he began, but did not live to complete. Though a king, he was also a reformer. He was too great a man for power to make him conservative. To destroy the bigotry for the past he ordered the destruction of the old histories. Amid the violent opposition which this measure called forth he died, and left the kingdom to a worthless son. Rebellion followed, and a new dynasty was established.

It would be tedious and useless to recount the struggles between rival factions. The period of the Han dynasty (206 B. C.-23 A. D.) was a brilliant one. Paper was invented, libraries founded, and the system of competitive examination for political offices was introduced. This system gives power to the people, for it opens the way for the poorest lad to rise, not by favor, but by merit.

The Tang dynasty was memorable, (618-905.) The empire stretched from the Caspian Sea to the Pacific Ocean; embassies from far-off nations gathered at the court, and the art of printing by blocks led to the golden age of literature. Arab merchants settled in Chinese ports, and the religion of Mohammed took deep root.

Then appears Jenghiz Khan, (1160,) who ranks among

the greatest soldiers that has ever lived. He came from Japan, and led a Mongolian army in triumph over Central Asia, destroying hostile cities and spreading desolation. His triumph was complete, and he established the Mongol dynasty on the dragon throne. In 1215 his grandson, Kublai—the “Great Khan”—assumed sovereign power. His virtues are extolled by Marco Polo, whose travels in China did much to make that land known to Europe. At this time the nation reached its highest point, and carried on a brisk trade with Venice and Genoa. But it was never forgotten that the Mongolian rulers were foreigners, and their power came to an end. The Ming dynasty followed, (1368–1628,) and friendly relations with foreigners were cultivated. Students from Corea, Japan, and Siam flocked to the university at Nanking.

Then came the Manchoo Tartars, who swept over the country, captured Peking, and established the Ta-tsing or “Great Pure” dynasty, (1644,) which continues down to the present time. The national head-dress was the long cue, (“pig-tail,”) which the Chinese wear as a badge of loyalty. The present ruler is in his minority, which is a pity, as the empire needs a ruler of wisdom and strength to guide it in the new channel into which it is being driven by the arts and civilization of Europe.

Trouble arose between England and China because of the restrictions which the latter laid upon trade. The Mandarins bitterly complained of the introduction of opium, and demanded that English merchants should not import it from India. War followed, and China was forced to grant the privilege. England obtains a large revenue from the opium trade; but that trade is the curse of China, and is a strong barrier to the spread of Christian missions.

In 1850 the Tai-ping rebellion broke out. A young man proclaimed that he was sent by heaven to put down the foreign dynasty, and to be himself the ruler. Crowds

flocked to his standard, and it was only after twelve years of war and the destruction of much life and property that this formidable rebellion was put down.

What the history of China will be within the next fifty years cannot be told. The government resists innovations. Fear has made her adopt European methods in the army and navy, and a desire to protect her interests has led her to appoint legations to foreign countries. The example of Japan is not without effect. The rulers have yielded, and must yield more. When a system of railroads is completed—as it will be—this ancient land will double its wealth and enter upon a new career in its civilization.

*The People.*—The total population of China proper is about four hundred millions. The people belong to the Mongolian variety of the human race. The skin is yellow, the hair black and coarse, the eyes oblique, and the cheek bones high and prominent. The race is unwarlike, fond of peace, loving home, and given to mercantile and literary pursuits. The crowded condition of the country has forced the people to habits of rigid economy. It costs but little for the poorer classes to live; for their wants are few and easy to satisfy. Rice is their main article of food; their clothing is of the cheapest kind, and they dwell in crowded apartments. They rarely drink strong liquors, but are given to the use of opium. Gambling is among their vices; and they are fond of the drama, which is, however, in a rude state. They are patient workmen, and show great skill in their various manufactures. They love their land, and if they leave it, hope soon to return. They are an educated people after their fashion. They study the “Nine Classics,” and through life regulate their conduct by the “Book of Rites.” Form and ceremony make up their public life, and titles of honor are abundant.

Women occupy an inferior position. Girls are taught to

sew and cook, and are taught but little else. They are married early in life, and all the details of the marriage ceremony are arranged by professional match-makers. The custom of binding the feet dates back from the ninth century, and grew into a fashion, quite as absurd though not as injurious to health as some of the fashions of Europe and America.

The Chinaman endures pain without much show of feeling, and meets death with apparent unconcern. He is strangely anxious about the details of his funeral. He is pleased when his children present him with a beautiful coffin for his future use. He desires to have sons who will, after he is dead, perform the customary sacrifices at his tomb ; for he thinks that on these the peace of his soul depends.

The strongest and best feature in Chinese life is the reverence which children have for their parents. It is a reverence taught by law and strengthened by religion. It also is a reverence prompted by affection, and it lasts through life. The married son who lives under his father's roof abides by his father's decision. The family tie is strong, and this is the reason why the nation has been so enduring. In this respect the example set by China is fair to look upon, and is worthy of imitation.

*Language and Literature.*—The language of China is in a primitive form. The words are of one syllable, and without grammatical inflation. There is no alphabet, and thought is expressed on paper by thousands of distinct symbols. The growth of the language was checked by the production of those great literary works which are standards among the people. Legends differ as to who was the first inventor of writing in China. The first characters were simply rude pictures of the objects to be represented. These characters were then combined, and then put in different positions to express different meanings ; as, for example, a circle above a

straight line meant sunrise, or dawn; and the character for hand, made in one direction means "right," and in the opposite direction means "left." But inventive genius failed to make as many characters as there were ideas, so certain arbitrary marks were adopted to represent certain sounds, and these, with all their combinations, amount to 20,000. Two words are put together to express an idea not expressed by either separately, as, in English, we say inkstand and steam-boat. There are six styles of writing the Chinese characters, and these vary in legibility, and are sometimes made more obscure by the artistic flourishes of skillful pen-men. While there are 30,000 characters in the language, they are represented to the ear by only 500 syllabic sounds. A difficulty arises as how to use so few sounds so as to express so many characters. One way, and a very puzzling way to a foreigner, is to express different meanings by different intonations. This requires a practiced ear and a practiced tongue. The literature which has molded the mind of China is comprised in the "Nine Classics." One of these is the "Book of History," edited by Confucius from ancient writings. It contains a record of the old dynasties, and is regarded by the Chinese as the foundation of their political system and of much of their knowledge. It consists of a series of conversations between the king and his ministers. The "Book of Rites" has done more than any other book to make China what it was and is. It regulates the whole public and private life of the people, and its rules make the people one, and fetter freedom of thought and action. The "Spring and Summer Annals" were written by Confucius. This work is a disappointment, and is inferior to the four books which were written by his disciples. The "Nine Classics" have no great literary merit, and cannot take rank with the immortal works of the great Greek and Roman authors. They lack imagination, and have little broad and generous thought. The spirit of them all is

“Walk in the trodden paths,” and for this reason his teachings have been popular with rulers who believed in keeping things as they are. The commentaries upon these “Nine Classics” are numberless, and in the main worthless. But the influence of these Classics has been immense, and so far enduring. Every child is taught them, and every man who seeks office is required to pass an examination upon them. Their publication led to the invention of paper and of printing. Had they been works of genius, instead of compilations or rules for living, their influence could not have been so wide-spread, but in the end would have been more beneficial. It is better to awaken the human mind than to try to satisfy it.

There are also works on geography and history, and some encyclopedias. In the “Book of Odes” is found the early ballads and songs composed in the feudal days, before the people were one nation. The novels are of inferior value. Dramatic literature abounds, as the theater is national and religious. The people flock to it, and it is under the direct control of the law. It seems strange, therefore, that the plays should be so rude, and so little attention should be paid to stage decorations. To sum up this paragraph—the literature of China does not rank high among the literatures of the world. This comes partly from the fact that the imagination has not been cultivated, that the language is not flexible, and that China has not had its mind kindled and strengthened with the works of the great poets, historians, and philosophers of Greece, Rome, and England.

*Government.*—The government is a patriarchal despotism. The family idea is carried into the State, and the emperor is the father of his people. He has great power over his children—even the power of life and death. The people are to submit, except where his conduct is such that he ceases to be—as it were—a father to them, and then they can rebel. He is the “Son of heaven,” and offers sacrifices

for the people. His life is, however, hampered by a vast number of regulations, and every official action is to be done according to precedent. He is aided by his official cabinet. Among the high officers are the Censors, who criticise the actions of the officials, and sometimes bring such as do wrong to justice. The provinces of the empire are mainly self-governed, though they must pay an annual tribute to the central government at Peking. Mandarins are distinguished in rank by the color of the button on the top of the cap, and there are nine colors to mark the nine ranks. The "peacock feather" is eagerly sought for, and is given only to men of greatest merit. The system of government is in theory excellent, but in practice defective. The Mandarins are underpaid and hence are willing to receive from the officials under them "presents"—that is, bribes. Examinations for office are often unfairly conducted, and money, not merit, opens the way. The eagerness for office causes a large class of aspirants to live on others for support. Corruption has tainted both the rulers and those who are ruled. Truth is not heeded, and hence the courts of justice resort sometimes to torture—mainly by flogging. The punishments are cruel. Death is inflicted by strangling and beheading; and though the latter is the less painful of the two methods, it is shunned as the more disgraceful.

*Religions.*—The oldest religion held forth the idea of a Supreme Being and a vast number of inferior gods. It paved the way for Buddhism, which was introduced from India during the first century of the Christian era. The people were prepared for it by the teachings of the sages, and it spread rapidly, and became the chief religion. It has many temples, and a large number of priests of both sexes; and, with the people generally, it has sunk into a coarse idolatry. Taoism was founded by one of the reformers and teachers who lived 500 B. C. It teaches that the highest

aim of man is to enjoy life, and also the doctrine of attendant spirits. The system of Confucius is, however, that which is followed by all the learned classes, and at stated periods they assemble in temples to read and expound his writings. Confucius taught nothing new, but gathered and gave currency to the old traditions. The mass of the people do not make much distinction between the religions, but worship in any temple which suits their convenience. On one point they attach great importance, and that is to the worship of their ancestors. They worship and offer incense before the ancestral tablets.

In 1807 Protestant missions were established. Rev. Robert Morrison went to Canton and translated the Bible into the Chinese language. Missions from the United States were established in 1829, and by the treaty of 1842 five new ports were opened to the Gospel. All the leading denominations are now represented in China, and the increase of converts is encouraging. The mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church was started in 1846, and is steadily growing in numbers and in influence. The prospects for the Christian Church are bright, and at the present rate of increase China will be a Christian nation during the next century.

## JAPAN.

After a voyage of three weeks on the Pacific Ocean the steamer from San Francisco enters the port of Yokohama. Here the tourist takes the cars, and after a journey of eighteen miles enters Tokio, the capital of Japan. This great city is the best place in which to study the history, customs, and art of the most enterprising people of the East.

*Japan.*—The Empire of Japan consists of a long chain of islands near the eastern coast of Asia. The total number of these is more than 3,000. Many of them are merely barren rocks; but four are large and fertile. The shape of

Hondo (main island) is that of a crescent. There is a long line of sea-coast, with numerous capes, bays, and inlets. The country is hilly, the streams small, but violent in the rainy season ; and there are several lakes, one of which is remarkable for the beauty of its banks. There is a mountain which rises more than 12,000 feet, and in shape like a cone. This mountain is regarded as sacred, and pilgrimages are made to its summit.

The mineral wealth of the country is great for its size. Gold, silver, coal, and iron are found, and copper is specially abundant. From this last metal the current coinage is made, and a vast variety of articles for use in the house and in the temple. The bronze work of Japan is in demand in the markets of the world.

The country is rich in vegetation. The timber is fine, and some of the great roads are well shaded with maples and pines. All the fruits of the tropics are found here, and among the vegetables cultivated are sweet potatoes, tomatoes, radishes, and rice. The two latter form the chief articles of food with the lower classes, and from rice is brewed an acid liquor which is the national beverage. The domestic animals are the same as those found in other lands ; the wild birds are of many varieties, and some adorned with beautiful plumage ; and the fisheries along the coast are very productive.

The roads through the empire have improved within recent years. There are two lines of railway, and others are projected. High roads connect the large cities and numerous towns ; and stages traverse them. In the large towns the public cabs are drawn by men.

The cities of Japan are three in number: Tokio, (formerly called Yedo,) Ozaka, and Kioto. The last-named was the ancient capital, and is in the midst of beautiful scenery. It has many temples, and was for centuries the home of literature, art, and religion. The old imperial palace is now a

museum, with magnificent paintings, and works in bronze and porcelain. The growth of Tokio has been rapid in recent years, and it has been since 1868 the residence of the emperor. The city is nine miles long and eight miles wide, and one eighth of this area is occupied by rivers and canals.

The population is about thirty-five millions. The country is in the main well governed, and special attention is given to education. The people in the rural districts are poor, and the wealth of the country is not as great as was expected when it was first opened to commerce. The public spirit shown by the rulers is worthy of all praise. They have been quick to adopt the best features of the Western nations with whom they have recently come in contact.

*History.*—Legends declare that the people of Japan are of divine origin. Their real origin is uncertain. They probably came from the north-eastern highlands of Asia, settled first at Corea, and thence entered Japan. These settlers found a wild native race, and gradually subdued, and perhaps absorbed, them. The emperor (“Mikado”) held his court at the present city of Kioto, and around him grew a class of military leaders, who made war, and then had the lands they won divided among them. This gave rise to the feudal system, with its castles, its wealthy and often tyrannical few, and its many serfs. Then arose rivalries, jealousies, and long and bloody wars between the heads of noble families until, in 1180, Yoritomo, an able soldier, arose, triumphed over his foes, and appointed military instead of civil rulers over the most troublesome districts. The emperor gave him the title of “Shogun,” which means the “rebel-subduing general.” The result was he rose to a dangerous equality with the emperor himself, and there were two rulers—the one a ruler in name, and the other in fact. The one had the titles and had his court at Kioto; and the other had the military power and lived at Tokio. This

double rulership lasted until 1868, when the nobles and people together cried out against the despotism of the Shogun, (the military chief,) declared him to be a usurper, banished him, and proclaimed the Mikado (the emperor) to be the sole ruler of the civil and military power of the empire. This great event marks a new period in the history of Japan.

The policy of seclusion dates from 1637. Up to that time the Jesuits had been welcomed, and thousands had professed the Christian faith. But the Jesuits prompted the converts to rise against the government, and this rebellion was put down after terrible slaughter. Japan then closed her ports to the hateful foreigners, and kept them closed for two hundred and twenty years. At present the ruling powers welcome the civilization of Europe, and are willing both to give and receive.

*Literature and Art.*—From the eighth to the twelfth centuries was the golden age of literature. Wars abounded, but at the capital—Kioto—scholars and writers were found. Among the best works of that period are those written by women. Poétry has always been a favorite study, and verse-making seems to be an art greatly coveted. There are many histories of the empire, and geographies and guide-books are numerous. The dramatic literature is poor, and the novels are of the sensational school. The newspaper press is a modern growth, and is hampered by government restrictions.

The wonderful art of Japan first became known to the world at the London Exhibition, in 1862, and since then art goods are found in all the great cities. The genius of the artists is imitative rather than imaginative, and their skill is unsurpassed. Their art is purely decorative, and has stopped short of the development of other nations. What the Japanese know how to do, they know how to do well,

and some of their processes are still a mystery to Western nations. Their porcelain and lacquer ware and their bronze work are indeed a study, and their choice designs for wall paper and for textile fabrics have found in Europe and in America a host of eager imitators.

*Religions.*—The most ancient religion is Sintoism, which is founded on the worship of spirits, which are said to control the actions of men. There is the “Great Spirit of Heavenly Light,” who receives the highest adoration; and a vast number of inferior deities. It has five commandments, one of which teaches purity of soul, and another the importance of pilgrimages. Fire is an emblem of purity.

Buddhism, whose native home is India, was introduced, about 532, from Corea. It rose to vast power, and its priests led armies in the field. As a result Buddhism was assailed in turn, and is now declining. As in China so in Japan, the educated classes follow, in the main, the teachings of Confucius.

In 1549 the Jesuit Francis Xavier visited Japan. Missions were established, until the Jesuits were suppressed and their followers destroyed. Protestant missions were started in 1859. The Bible is now translated and is circulated among the people, and there are several thousand members of the various Churches. The work has been hindered by the jealousy of the government, which remembers what Jesuitism was, but this jealousy is fading, and there is in this interesting land a bright future for the Church of Christ.

#### NOTES.

Confucius did not claim to be the founder of a religion, but a teacher and a reformer. He abounds in short quaint sayings, which the people know by heart. We append a few of his celebrated maxims:

“Do not to others what you would not wish done to you.”

“What the superior man seeks is in himself; what the small man seeks is in others.”

“Learning undigested by thought is labor lost; and thought unaided by learning is perilous.”

“In style all that is required is to convey the meaning.”

“A poor man who does not flatter and a rich man who is not proud are worthy of praise.”

“Man is greater than any system of thought.”

“The cautious seldom err.”

Such sentences as the above have done much to form and make permanent the character of the Chinese.

Mencius was the second of the two sages of China. He lays great stress on inherent goodness, and the power of man to make himself right. He says little about God or heaven. Here are some of his maxims and illustrations:

“If a man make his heart right, there is little else for him to do.”

“The great man is he who does not lose the heart of a child.”

“Good government is feared by the people; good instruction is loved by them.”

“Man tends to good as water tends to flow downward.”

“Death in the discharge of duty may be ascribed to the will of heaven.”

“I like life and I like righteousness; but if I cannot keep both, I will let the life go.”

“No man can bend himself and at the same time keep others straight.”

“To dig a well and stop before you reach the spring is to throw away the well.”

“People cannot live without fire and water, and they are abundant, and so a wise king is he who will cause grain to be as abundant as they.”

# CHINA AND JAPAN.

[THOUGHT OUTLINE TO HELP THE MEMORY.]

1. *Canton.* Size? Population? Junks? Temples? 1634? 1667? 1834? 1842?
2. *Empire.* Extent? Plain and rivers? Productions? Minerals? "The Sor-row of China?" Canals? The "Great Highway?" The "Great Wall?"
3. *History.* Fables? Yao? Confucius? Chow dynasty? "The First Uni-versal Emperor?" His work? Hau dynasty? Tang? Jenghiz Khan? 1215? 1644? National head-dress? England and China? Tai-ping re-bellion?
4. *People.* Population? Characteristics? Vices? Woman? Funeral? Rever-ence for parents.
5. *Language and Literature.* Peculiarities? 30,000? 500? Nine classics? Merit?
6. *Government.* Family idea Censors? Mandarins? Peacock feather? Cor-ruption in politics?
7. *Religion.* Oldest? Buddhism? Taoism? Confucius? Protestant missions?
8. *Japan.* Islands—3,000. Mineral Wealth? Vegetation? Roads? Cities? Government? History? Literature and Art? Religion? Xavier? Prot-estants?

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